

## Chinese Research on EFL Writing Teaching in the Past 5 Years: Based on the Statistics and Analysis of Language Authoritative Journals From 2009 to 2013

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### Abstract

This study is devoted to revealing the research characteristic on EFL writing teaching in the past 5 years by Chinese authors. Result of contrastive analysis and survey of the essays published on 14 kinds of authoritative linguistic journals from year 2009 to 2013 shows: a) the research of Chinese EFL writing teaching develops steadily in spite of low internationalization level and scale. b) From the point of the research content, although the current scope is extensive with all major aspects involved, it is disproportionate in certain topics, perceptual thinking and the micro level accounts for large proportion. c) In terms of the research methods, statistical results show that Chinese researchers apply the three research methods evenly, but the proportion of qualitative method is overweight. d) And the research object is too centralized.

**Key words:** EFL writing teaching; Authoritative journals; Research object; Research method; Research content

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### INTRODUCTION

As an dispensable part of EFL teaching research, writing research holds a very important role because writing is regarded as an "intricate" and complex task as well as the "most difficult of the language abilities to acquire" (Allen & Corder, 1974, p.177). Consequently, many researchers are constantly on the move to discover new ways and methods to teach language writing more effectively and many achievements have attained. Silva (2011) concludes that second language writing studies are a dynamic, growing, and maturing area of research and will continue as such for the foreseeable future. Since 1980s, international writing theoretical researches and studies have developed more theoretically and systematically. In addition, the Chinese attention on EFL writing teaching research is also on the rise, which results in great extension in terms of research focus (Wang, 2012).

Many previous researchers in China (Qin, 2009; Huang & Yu, 2009; Guo, 2009; Zhao et al., 2010; He, 2013; Zhu, 2011; Wang & Jiang, 2012; Liu & Ling, 2012) carried out the investigation and analysis of Chinese EFL writing from various aspects. Qin (2009) conducts a survey on articles concerning college English writing based on 8 core linguistic journals from 1987 to 2007 and reveals the characteristics and limitation of those researches. Guo (2009) conducts a survey on articles concerning second language writing (SLW) in China in 8 core linguistic journals from 1991 to 2008, she presents that the overall research has undergone a characteristic of scientific, poly-faceted and rational development. However, the use of multimedia programs designed to take research that is more empirical on what influence the learning environment can put on learners should be strengthened. While Huang and Yu (2009) presents a literature review concerning EFL writing in China based on pertinent articles published in core linguistic journals since 1993. Besides the features, they point out that empirical studies

are expected to be further enhanced; more attention has to be paid to learners besides college students; the employment of statistical tools needs improving; genre awareness is not strong enough and writing itself should be contextualized; researches into writing textbooks should be attached more importance to in the future. He (2013) conducts a brief survey of Chinese EFL Writing researches in 14 key EFL teaching-related journals from 2001 to 2010 and finds that a) the share of EFL Writing articles in journals' total publications has been increasing steadily; b) the number of key authors in this field and their contributions cover much less than the moderate rate that widely accepted Lotka Law has described; c) while the EFL Writing field has seen a large variety of topics in content, but it is disproportionate in certain topics; and d) methodologically, researches in this field has tended to be more empirical than non-empirical. Liu, Ling (2012) give a careful comparison and analysis of the essays published in authoritative and the key magazine in the field of foreign second-language writing teaching and finds the hot topics are the study on "teaching and learning process, teaching and learning objects" and study on "teaching methods" respectively.

Although these independent studies are very significant, they are far enough to fully reflect or represent the actual appearance in the field especially in terms of coverage and depth. The reasons are as follows: a) the length of interception time span of each research literature differs, furthermore the start-stop time is uneven. b) The standard of selection of literature source journals is not unified, the type and quantity of resource journal is not unified; c) the classification of research content and method is not unified; d) the usage of study source database is different (He, 2013). Besides, there is scary related literature of research review focusing on English writing teaching and no record of the research review by Chinese authors in international SSCI journals.

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## 1. RESEARCH DESIGN

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### 1.1 Research Question

This research is designed to reveal the characteristic of the Chinese research of EFL writing teaching based on investigation of papers on EFL writing teaching published in 14 selected core linguistic journals in the past five years (from 2009 to 2013). The following questions are the goal of research: a) what is the position of research of Chinese EFL writing teaching? b) What is the characteristic of Chinese research on EFL writing teaching in terms of research level and scale, research content, research method and research subject compared to the leading research abroad? E.g., what does the research content mainly focus on? Does it have hot spot? If so, what is it? What kind of research method does it apply? c) What aspect should be improved on future research?

### 1.2 Research Object and Procedure

Considering the authority and broad coverage, the object of this study is mainly to extract the research papers of English writing teaching published from 2009-2013 in 2 kinds of authoritative journals: international language SSCI and foreign language core journal in "Chinese Core Journals (the fifth edition)" according to the classification of CHSSCD (Chinese Humanities and Social Science Citation Database).

Firstly, the researcher chooses all the 13 kinds of language SSCI journals in Taylor & Francis Database as the sample object resource of international language SSCI. The list covers *European Journal of English Studies*, *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *Teachers and Teaching*, *Teaching in Higher Education*, *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *Language and Education*, *Language and Intercultural Communication*, *Language Assessment Quarterly*, *Language Awareness*, *Language Culture and Curriculum*, *Language Matters*, *Research on Language and Social Interaction*. Secondly, the topic "writing" is searched in "Taylor & Francis journal full-text database" in these journals in the past 5 years (from 2009 to 2013) and get 43 papers. Thirdly, after the analysis of the research result in terms of content and correlation to the topic, 4 papers of Notice and non-English are excluded out of the statistics, the final 39 articles left into the scope of research, forming database 2. Furthermore there are 7 out of the 13 kinds of journals have not published any relevant articles, so there are 6 kinds of journals and 39 papers left in the actual research scope. Fourthly, after analysis of authors in database 2, four papers by Chinese authors are singled out to database 3.

The likewise procedures apply in these Chinese Core Foreign Language Journals. Firstly, the research determines the following 9 core linguistic journals as statistical source: *Foreign Languages and Their Teaching*, *Foreign Languages Research a* (ISSN: 1005-7242), *Foreign Language Learning Theory and Practice*, *Foreign Language Research b* (ISSN: 1000-0100), *Foreign Language Education*, *Modern Foreign Languages*, *Journal of Foreign Languages*, *Foreign Language World*, *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*. Secondly, the topic "writing teaching" is searched in China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database in these journals in the past 5 years and get 73 papers. Thirdly, based on the analysis of the content and correlation of these papers, 7 papers (4 notices, 1 report, 1 book review and 1 Russian) are excluded and 66 papers remained, forming database 1. However, *Journal of Foreign Languages* has not published any relevant articles in the statistics duration and thus excluded, so there are 8 kinds of journals and 66 papers left in the actual research scope.

At last, the researcher instructs three databases. database 1: Chinese domestic research database, which

contains 66 selected papers published in Chinese journals; database 2: international database, which contains 39 selected papers published in Taylor & Francis Database; database 3: Chinese researcher's database, which contains 70 papers by Chinese authors from database 1 and 2.

### 1.3 Research Method

This research applies the method of "literature retrieval and statistical analysis". Firstly, the researcher determines the classification standard of the writing teaching research on the aspects of content and method. After consulting with the division of research content by Wang (2004), Liu and Ling (2012), Yan and Cui (2011), the researcher classifies the research content of English writing teaching into six aspects (see Table 1). With reference to the classification of research methods in applied linguistics

research by Wen and Wang (2004), and Guo (2009), the researcher divides these studies into three categories (see Table 1). Moreover, the difference between quantitative method and qualitative method is based on the priority of statistical or text analysis. Secondly, the classification of these 105 papers is implemented according to the above standard in the aspect of quantity, research contents, methods and teaching object. In order to facilitate the statistics and comparison, the researcher classifies the papers according to the source of the main conclusion based since some papers involve in multiple types in terms of the research contents and methods. For example, as in an article making use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, if the main conclusions and points of view bases on statistical data, it is classified as quantitative method.

**Table 1**  
**Classification of Research Content and Method of English Writing Teaching**

| Object           | Main types                                 | Subtypes   |
|------------------|--|--|
| Research content | Non-teacher teaching environment           | Learner's internal factors, development and application of teaching resources, development and application of Instructional Technology |
|                  | Teaching principle and mode                | Teaching principle, teaching mode  |
|                  | Teaching approach and strategy             | Teaching approach, teaching strategy   |
|                  | Teaching evaluation                        | Test, correction, feedback, evaluation   |
|                  | Review and reflection on teaching research | Review on teaching research, reflection on teaching  |
|                  | Research on specific teaching content      | Diction, sentence, discourse organization, grammar, subject classification, writing, rhetoric, etc.                                    |
| Research method  | Quantitative method                        | Questionnaire, empirical research  |
|                  | Qualitative method                         | Observation, thinking aloud, participation experience  |
|                  | Experimental method                        |  |

## 2. RESEARCH RESULT AND ANALYSIS

### 2.1 Quantity

**Table 2**  
**Statistics of Distribution of Statistical Papers in Database 1 and 2**

|            | Journal   | Year |      |      |      |      | Total |
|------------|---|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
|            |   | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |       |
| Database 1 | FLE (Foreign Language Education)                      | 3    | 5    | 1    | 2    | 5    | 16    |
|            | FLFTP (Foreign Language Learning Theory and Practice) | 1    | 2    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 6     |
|            | FLTR (Foreign Language Teaching and Research)         | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 1     |
|            | FLW ( Foreign Language World)                         | 4    | 2    | 7    | 3    | 3    | 19    |
|            | FLRb (Foreign Language Research b)                    | 1    | 2    | 0    | 2    | 1    | 6     |
|            | FLRa (Foreign Languages Research a)                   | 1    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 2    | 4     |
|            | FLTT (Foreign Languages and Their Teaching)           | 4    | 0    | 1    | 2    | 1    | 8     |
|            | MFL ( Modern Foreign Languages)                       | 3    | 0    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 6     |
|            | JFL (Journal of Foreign Languages)                    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0     |
|            | Total   | 17   | 11   | 12   | 12   | 14   | 66    |
| Percentage | 25.8  | 16.7 | 18.2 | 18.2 | 21.2 | 100  |       |

To be continued

Continued

|            | Journal  | Year |      |      |      |      | Total |
|------------|--|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
|            |  | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |       |
| Database 2 | THE (Teaching in Higher Education)                         | 0    | 0    | 6    | 5    | 2    | 13    |
|            | CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning)                 | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 4    | 5     |
|            | LE (Language and Education)                                | 0    | 0    | 2    | 3    | 1    | 6     |
|            | IETI (Innovations in Education and Teaching International) | 0    | 0    | 3    | 0    | 2    | 5     |
|            | LAQ (Language Assessment Quarterly)                        | 0    | 0    | 0    | 2    | 3    | 5     |
|            | LCC (Language Culture and Curriculum)                      | 0    | 0    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 5     |
|            | Total  | 0    | 0    | 13   | 12   | 14   | 39    |
| Percentage | 0  | 0    | 33.3 | 30.8 | 35.9 | 100  |       |

**Table 3**  
Statistics of Distribution of Total Papers in Statistical Time And Journals in Database 1 and 2

|            | Journal    | Year |      |      |      |      | Total |
|------------|------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
|            |            | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |       |
| Database 1 | FLE        | 109  | 107  | 112  | 95   | 100  | 825   |
|            | FLLTP      | 41   | 54   | 48   | 51   | 53   | 1068  |
|            | FLTR       | 109  | 107  | 112  | 95   | 100  | 825   |
|            | FLW        | 81   | 87   | 87   | 100  | 96   | 388   |
|            | FLRb       | 175  | 203  | 213  | 227  | 250  | 682   |
|            | FLRa       | 125  | 135  | 138  | 135  | 149  | 451   |
|            | FLTT       | 138  | 133  | 131  | 138  | 202  | 825   |
|            | MFL        | 78   | 80   | 81   | 81   | 68   | 440   |
|            | Total      | 965  | 974  | 996  | 1086 | 965  | 4926  |
|            | Database 2 | THE  | 91   | 25   | 62   | 60   | 76    |
| CALL       |            | 23   | 0    | 26   | 27   | 25   | 101   |
| LE         |            | 41   | 0    | 47   | 47   | 51   | 186   |
| IETI       |            | 38   | 0    | 48   | 42   | 43   | 171   |
| LAQ        |            | 24   | 0    | 25   | 23   | 20   | 92    |
| LCC        |            | 14   | 0    | 21   | 25   | 20   | 80    |
| Total      |            | 231  | 25   | 229  | 224  | 235  | 944   |

**Table 4**  
Statistics of Distribution of Statistical Papers in Database 2 by Chinese Authors

| No | Title   | Author's name                               | First author affiliation  | Journal | Year | Topic                       | Method                        |
|----|---|---|---|---------|------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Exploring the impact of using automated writing evaluation in English as a foreign language university students' writing                | Ying-Jian Wang, Hui-Fang Shang, Paul Briody | Department of Applied English, I-Shou University  | CALL    | 2013 | Teaching evaluation         | Empirical research            |
| 2  | The integration of "critical" and "literacy" education in the EFL curriculum: Expanding the possibilities of critical writing practices | Shin-ying Huang                             | Department of Foreign Languages, National Taiwan Normal University                          | LCC     | 2012 | Teaching principle and mode | Empirical research            |
| 3  | Beliefs and practices of Chinese university teachers in EFL writing instruction   | Luxin Yang, Shaofen Gao                     | National Research Center for Foreign Language Education, Beijing Foreign Studies University | LCC     | 2013 | Teaching principle and mode | Class observation             |
| 4  | To what extent are postgraduate students from China prepared for academic writing needed on UK master's courses?                        | Jing Tian, Graham David Low                 | School of Foreign Languages, Renmin University of China                                     | LCC     | 2012 | Teaching principle and mode | Questionnaires and interviews |

According to the statistical results (see Table 2-3), the following conclusion can be drawn:

a) In whole, the absolute number of Chinese research of EFL writing teaching is large, but it occupies a very small percentage. The total number of statistical papers in database 1 is 66, with the annual average 8.5 pieces / year. Simultaneously, the total number of papers published in the chosen journals is 4,926; therefore, the statistical papers occupy only 1.3% of second language research. While in database 2, the chosen 6 journals have published 39 relevant papers in the statistical time, accounting for the proportion of 4.1% of the total 944 papers, and the annual average is 6.5 pieces/year. Therefore, in terms of absolute number, the Chinese research seems more prosperous, but in terms of relative percentage, the Chinese situation is not optimistic. In all, the above figure illustrates that Chinese research of EFL writing teaching has played a reasonable role in second language research, but far from enough.

b) In annual total number of papers published by years, the Chinese situation stays stable, with a top in 2009 and a low in 2010, and the difference among 2010 to 2013 can be neglected. Likewise, there is slight difference in Taylor & Francis too. This shows English writing teaching and research has a stable proportion in the field of language research.

c) By research standard, the Chinese research is in low internationalization level and scale. Because there are only 4 Chinese papers (accounts for 10%) published in statistical journals in Taylor & Francis, with an annual average less than 1 piece/year. Besides, only half of the correspondence institutions are in the Mainland of China. Furthermore, the distribution of those papers is not even, it focuses in LCC and CALL. Their topics include teaching principal, mode, feedback and reflection. This shows that although China has a certain place in this field, it is very necessary for the researchers (especially in Mainland) to improve their level and broaden their publishing journals.

## 2.2 Research Content

### 2.2.1 General

According to the relevant factors affiliating teaching, the researcher divides the research content into the following 6 aspects: non-teacher teaching environment, teaching principle and mode, teaching approach and strategy, teaching evaluation, teaching review and reflection as well as research on specific teaching content.

As you can see from Table 5-6, the Chinese research content has the following characteristics: a) the hotspot focuses on two aspects as “teaching concept and mode” as well as “teaching evaluation”, which is half identical with the international trend. Specific hot topics include “writing feedback”, “teaching principle”, “teaching approach”, “teaching mode”, “teaching strategy”, “teaching review”, “discourse organization” and “grammar”. b) The least popular research content is “teaching research review

and reflection” and “non-teacher teaching environment”, the first one is with the same situation in international. However, as to specific topic, there is some difference between domestic and abroad: The least popular specific topic in Chinese research is “test”, “diction and sentence”, “development and application of teaching technology” and “teaching reflection”. While in Taylor & Francis there is not any record about “learner’s internal factors”, “test”, “teaching review”, “discourse organization”, “grammar”, “diction and sentence” and the least popular specific topic is “development and application of teaching resource”, “feedback”, “rhetorical devices” and “teaching approach”. c) Contrary to the international situation, the topic of “teaching strategy” attracts far less attention in Chinese research, and “research on specific teaching content” and “Learner’s internal factors” attracts far more attention. d) According to the above data and combined with the text analysis, the researcher finds that the Chinese research is extensive with all major aspects involved, but it is disproportionate in certain topics, it focus more on the micro aspects of specific application and promotion compared to international database. In all perceptual thinking and the micro level account for a large proportion.

### 2.2.2 In Detail

In non-teacher teaching environment, Guo (2010), Li (2013), and Zhang (2010) implement convey or experiment on “learner’s internal factors” in aspect of “writing anxiety” and “different planning time to the quality of composition” and suggest we should take combination measures to reduce learner’s anxiety. Cheng (2009) and Xiang (2009) conduct the research on “English writing teaching auxiliary platform” and intervention resources and propose that it is very necessary to strengthen the construction of development and application of teaching resource. As to the topic in “development and application of teaching technology”, it concentrates on the application of language corpus and automatic evaluation system.

In teaching principle and mode, there are plenty of explores of introduction or application of various teaching principles such as memes, experiencing theory, critical writing, adoption theory and pragmatics theory, etc. and among them “memes” and “experiencing theory” seems hotter. Chen (2012) makes an attempt to adopt the listening & speaking-to-write approach in English writing teaching in the light of memes and finds that the “three-in-one” listening-speaking-writing approach helps improve students’ writing ability and enhance their interest and confidence in writing as well as sense of success via writing, thus contributing to their overall development in language skills. Luo (2011) implements an English writing instructional experiment in which Experiencing Teaching Theory is applied in a local university for four rounds since 2005, involving

600 students and finds that the testees' awareness of genre and their ability of practical writing increased obviously.

There are also various discussions about teaching mode, and internet-based and interaction are very popular. Yang (2012) intends to explore the necessity and feasibility of innovating and developing contents and models of the project-based and academic-oriented college English writing teaching in its transition period to undergraduates. The results indicate that project-based mode help the students acquire more opportunities to experience the real world and use English, which contribute to the enhancing of their awareness and capabilities in practical, exploratory and creative studies as well as their competence in general and academic English writing.

Jiang (2010) intends to investigate the feasibility and efficacy of the application of metaphorical theories in the advanced English writing instruction within advanced English course for senior English majors and finds it helps students understand the basic knowledge of metaphorical theories, develop their awareness of using metaphors, and enhance, to some extent, their ability of understanding and using metaphors. Guo (2009) attempt to explore the utility of blog for improving teaching of college English writing

and the results show that use of blog in teaching English writing is conducive to the improvement of students' writing competence.

In teaching approach and strategy, there is no focus, critical writing, project writing, process writing and integrating reading and writing modalities seems more popular.

The research of teaching evaluation mainly focuses on different forms of feedback or evaluation such as teacher's feedback or evaluation, peer's feedback or evaluation, and internet-based feedback or evaluation. The common opinion they share is that the application of multiple forms of instant feedback or evaluation and its quality is very vital to the learners.

In teaching review and reflection, there are various discussions on the aspect of teaching approach, various teaching object, or writing competence etc. but most of them focus on the level of college English writing teaching other than of senior middle school or post-graduate.

The research on specific teaching content is scattered, among them "discourse organization" and "grammar" seems more popular. Furthermore, the research on persuasive writing is the utmost concern than narrative, informative or special genre.

**Table 5**  
**Statistics of Distribution of Statistical Papers in Database 1 in Terms of Research Content**

| Research content                      |  | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | Total | %    |
|---------------------------------------|--|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| Non-teacher teaching environment      | Learner's internal factors                         | 0    | 2    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 3     | 4.5  |
|                                       | Development and application of teaching resource   | 3    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 3     | 4.5  |
|                                       | Development and application of teaching technology | 1    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 2     | 3.0  |
|                                       | Total  | 4    | 2    | 0    | 1    | 1    | 8     | 12.2 |
| Teaching principle and mode           | Teaching principle                                 | 4    | 2    | 3    | 0    | 2    | 11    | 16.7 |
|                                       | Teaching mode                                      | 1    | 0    | 1    | 3    | 1    | 6     | 9.1  |
|                                       | Total  | 5    | 2    | 4    | 3    | 3    | 17    | 25.8 |
| Teaching approach and strategy        | Teaching strategy                                  | 1    | 1    | 2    | 0    | 0    | 4     | 6.1  |
|                                       | Teaching approach                                  | 0    | 0    | 2    | 3    | 0    | 5     | 7.6  |
|                                       | Total  | 1    | 1    | 4    | 3    | 0    | 9     | 13.6 |
| Teaching evaluation                   | Test   | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1     | 1.5  |
|                                       | Feedback   | 1    | 3    | 0    | 2    | 5    | 11    | 16.7 |
|                                       | Evaluation   | 1    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 1    | 3     | 4.5  |
|                                       | Total  | 3    | 3    | 1    | 2    | 6    | 15    | 22.7 |
| Teaching review and reflection        | Teaching review                                    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 0    | 1    | 4     | 6.1  |
|                                       | Teaching reflection                                | 0    | 1    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 2     | 3.0  |
|                                       | Total  | 1    | 2    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 6     | 9.1  |
| Research on specific teaching content | Discourse organization                             | 1    | 1    | 1    | 0    | 1    | 4     | 6.1  |
|                                       | Grammar  | 2    | 0    | 1    | 1    | 0    | 4     | 6.1  |
|                                       | Diction and sentence                               | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 1     | 1.5  |
|                                       | Else   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 1    | 2     | 3.0  |
|                                       | Total  | 3    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 3    | 11    | 16.7 |

**Table 6**  
**Statistics of Distribution of Statistical Papers in Database 2 in Terms of Research Content**

| Research content                      |  | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | Total | %    |
|---------------------------------------|--|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| Non-teacher teaching environment      | Learner's internal factors                         | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0    |
|                                       | Development and application of teaching resource   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 1     | 2.6  |
|                                       | Development and application of teaching technology | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 3    | 4     | 10.3 |
|                                       | Total  | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 4    | 5     | 12.8 |
| Teaching principle and mode           | Teaching principle                                 | 0    | 0    | 1    | 2    | 3    | 6     | 15.4 |
|                                       | Teaching mode                                      | 0    | 0    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 3     | 7.7  |
|                                       | Total  | 0    | 0    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 9     | 23.1 |
| Teaching approach and strategy        | Teaching strategy                                  | 0    | 0    | 6    | 3    | 3    | 12    | 30.8 |
|                                       | Teaching approach                                  | 0    | 0    | 2    | 0    | 0    | 2     | 5.1  |
|                                       | Total  | 0    | 0    | 8    | 3    | 3    | 14    | 35.9 |
| Teaching evaluation                   | Test   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0    |
|                                       | Feedback   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 1     | 2.6  |
|                                       | Evaluation   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 3    | 3    | 6     | 15.4 |
| Teaching review and reflection        | Total  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 4    | 3    | 7     | 18   |
|                                       | Teaching review                                    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0    |
|                                       | Teaching reflection                                | 0    | 0    | 1    | 2    | 0    | 3     | 7.7  |
| Research on specific teaching content | Total  | 0    | 0    | 1    | 2    | 0    | 3     | 7.7  |
|                                       | Discourse organization                             | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0    |
|                                       | Grammar  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0    |
|                                       | Diction and sentence                               | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0    |
|                                       | Else   | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 1     | 2.6  |
| Total                                 | 0  | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 2.6   |      |

### 2.3 Research Method

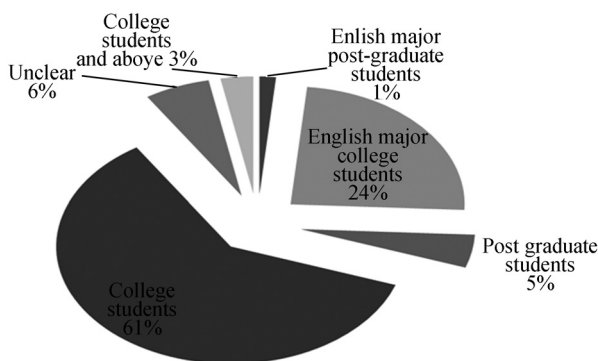
**Table 7**  
**Statistics of Distribution of Statistical Papers in Database 1 and 2 in Terms of Research Method**

| Method              |                     | Year                     |      |      |      |      | Total | %  |      |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|----|------|
|                     |                     | 2009                     | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |       |    |      |
| D1                  | Quantitative method | Questionnaire            | 1    | 2    | 1    | 1    | 0     | 5  | 7.6  |
|                     |                     | Empirical research       | 6    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 4     | 17 | 25.8 |
|                     |                     | total                    | 7    | 4    | 4    | 3    | 4     | 22 | 33.3 |
|                     | Qualitative method  | Participation experience | 0    | 1    | 1    | 0    | 0     | 2  | 3.0  |
|                     |                     | Observation              | 6    | 2    | 5    | 4    | 2     | 19 | 28.8 |
|                     |                     | Total                    | 6    | 3    | 6    | 4    | 2     | 21 | 31.8 |
| Experimental method | 4                   | 4                        | 2    | 5    | 8    | 23   | 34.8  |    |      |
| Total               | 17                  | 11                       | 12   | 12   | 14   | 66   | 100   |    |      |
| D2                  | Quantitative method | Questionnaire            | 0    | 0    | 1    | 2    | 0     | 3  | 4.5  |
|                     |                     | Empirical research       | 0    | 0    | 3    | 3    | 4     | 10 | 25.6 |
|                     |                     | total                    | 0    | 0    | 4    | 5    | 4     | 13 | 33.3 |
|                     | Qualitative method  | Participation experience | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1     | 1  | 1.5  |
|                     |                     | Observation              | 0    | 0    | 2    | 2    | 1     | 5  | 7.6  |
|                     |                     | Total                    | 0    | 0    | 2    | 2    | 2     | 6  | 9.1  |
| Experimental method | 0                   | 0                        | 7    | 5    | 8    | 20   | 51.2  |    |      |
| Total               | 0                   | 0                        | 13   | 12   | 14   | 39   | 100   |    |      |

The statistical results show that Chinese researchers apply the three research methods evenly while the experimental method occupies an absolute advantage in international research. Combined with text analysis, these figures further confirm with the previous finding (Qin, 2009 ) that Chinese researchers lay particular stress on individual perceptual thinking such as observation, participation experience which may lead to less scientific and rigorous.

## 2.4 Teaching Object

As Figure 1 show, the education level of teaching object of database 1 is almost pure full-time college student or above, of which English major students occupies 25%. There is no record on part-time education or other levels such as adult education or middle school.



**Figure 1**  
Statistics of Distribution of Statistical Papers in Database 1 in Terms of Teaching Object

## 2.5 Other Findings

- The fixed research team has not formed and the number of active authors is very small. According to the analysis of the authors, the research finds that there are 67 authors in database 3; the most active author is Luxin Yang, who is the first author of 3 papers; and there are 4 other authors who have published 2 papers; the left 62 authors just published 1 papers in 5 years. All these show that the Chinese research team is not so stable; the percentage of essays by active authors only occupies 13.6%.
- The distribution of statistical papers in individual journal is uneven. By the total number of statistical papers published in individual journal, the Chinese top two is *Foreign Language World* and *Foreign Language Teaching*, the bottom is *Foreign Language World* and *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, which barely publish any such papers. At Taylor & Francis, the top one is *Teaching in Higher Education*. The bottom 7 ones (*European Journal of English Studies*, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *Teachers and Teaching*,

*Language and Intercultural Communication*, *Language Awareness*, *Language Matters*, *Research on Language and Social Interaction*.) never publish any such papers, the other 6 journals are almost even. All the above figure shows that every journal has its own priority concern, the author must be aware of it before submission to enhance the chance of success.

## CONCLUSION

In all, this research reveals the following characteristic of Chinese research on EFL writing teaching in the past 5 years: a) that it develops steadily in spite of low internationalization level and scale in terms of quantity. b) From the point of the research content, although the current scope is extensive with all major aspects involved, it is disproportionate in certain topics, with the topic of “teaching strategy” attracting far less attention and “research on specific teaching content” and “Learner’s internal factors” attracting far more attention. Moreover, in whole the perceptual thinking and the micro aspect of specific application and promotion accounts for the large proportion. c) In terms of the research methods, the proportion of qualitative method is overweight. d) And the research object is too centralized with college students and above as well as persuasive writing or academic writing in terms of genre. e) The research team is not stable; the number of active authors is very small.

## LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

This research tries to investigate the characteristic of present Chinese research situation of EFL writing teaching in the past 5 years. The reliability of the findings of this research is limited for the following reasons: Firstly, the source database is only limited to a small group - only taking 14 kinds of journals into account other than broader database, so the samples can’t fully reflect or represent the actual appearance in the field of study especially in terms of coverage and depth. Secondly, the length of interception time span is a little short-only 5 years. Therefore the trend or change of research content can’t be observed obviously. Thirdly, the classification of research content and method of a single article is not unique since it may involve multiple or complicated topics or method. Fourthly, the subject journal of this research lacks variety; they all come from the same sort of key language journals. Therefore, further investigation should base on larger variety of subjects and time span, more detailed analyses of research content. Moreover, qualitative and quantitative analysis rather than descriptive analysis based on the corpus of Chinese research can be taken into account as well.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- To keep up tightly with the latest development of international research in research content.
- To further enhance the level, stability and scale of researchers.
- To pay more attention to learners besides college students.
- To attach more importance to the experimental method and genres besides persuasive writing.

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